

ABSTRACT

An improved handheld electronic device having an improved keyboard provides enhanced usability with fewer keys by enabling the keys to pivot slightly to provide multiple functions to the keys. The improved keyboard may, for example, include internal strips of conductive carbon that are disposed adjacent the keys and are electrically engageable with contacts on a printed circuit board. Specifically, when a key is pressed directly downward it collapses a single dome and connects together a set of primary contacts to provide a first function. When the key is pressed at the side thereof, the key pivots slightly, collapses the dome and connects together the primary contacts, and also engages a carbon strip with a pair of secondary contacts to connect together the secondary contacts, all of which provide a second function. The keyboard may be configured to be of a QWERTY configuration while using only a relatively small number of keys.